REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 11, 2004. Claims 1 to 62 remain pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 19, 25, 37, 49, 61 and 62 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to in a Form PTO-948 (Notice Of Draftspersons Patent Drawing Review) for allegedly having poor line quality. Submitted herewith are new formal drawings to be substituted for the drawings currently on file, together with a Letter Transmitting Formal Drawings. In this regard, the substitute drawings have not been marked with "replacement sheet" since no changes are being made to the drawings.

Claims 1 to 12 and 17 to 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,574,655 (Libert), and Claims 13 to 16 were rejected under § 103(a) over Libert in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,819,092 (Ferguson). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to accessing descriptions of multimedia items from a plurality of content providers. In the various aspects of the invention, a server receives a request from a receiving process for descriptions or structured information, where the request is in a predetermined request format. The server interprets the request and accesses information in response to the interpreted request. The accessed information is then formatted as a description or structured information, where the resulting description or structured information contains at least one link which represents a return request to the server. The server then sends the formatted description or structured information to the

receiving process. Thus, the return request represented by the link is in the predetermined request format and is a further request that may be a sub-request or the original request.

By way of example, referring to Examples H and I on pages 34 to 36, in response to a request for descriptions, the user is presented with 3 links. The first link is a request for images in a Lifestyle category, whereas the second and third links are requests to provide the sub-categories of Sports and Animals, respectively. In the event that the user selects the Sports link, a return request to the server is sent which results in 3 further links. The further links represent further return requests for providing images of the sub-categories Basketball, Football, and Hockey, respectively. Thus, the result of a request to the server includes links representing further requests to that server.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 1 is a system for facilitating access to descriptions of multimedia items from a plurality of content providers of the items, wherein information required by the descriptions is stored in corresponding metadata collections associated with the multimedia items, the system comprising (a) a metadata server associated with each the content provider and operable as a description-generating process for communicating with one or more description-receiving processes, each the metadata server being configured, for each the content provider, to perform the steps of (i) receiving a request for the descriptions from one of the description-receiving processes in a predetermined request format, (ii) interpreting the received request according to the predetermined request format, (iii) accessing the information about the multimedia items in the metadata collection of the content provider in response to the interpreted request, (iv) formatting the accessed information as a description according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting description containing at least one link which

represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the metadata server for descriptions; and (v) sending the formatted description to the the description-receiving process, and (b) at least one the description-receiving process accessible to and operable by potential customers of the content providers and providing the potential customers with a single user interface to access descriptions of multimedia items generated from the multiple metadata servers.

Amended independent Claim 19 is a system for providing a plurality of users access to multimedia items associated with a plurality of content providers, each the content provider having a legacy database in which descriptions of corresponding items are stored, a content database in which the corresponding multimedia items are stored, and a database manager for controlling access to the descriptions and corresponding multimedia items from the respective databases, the system comprising a media browser application accessible to each of the users and configured to generate user requests for descriptions of the multimedia items, the requests being generated in a predetermined request format, and a metadata server application associated with each the content provider and configured to translate each the user request received by the metadata server application from the predetermined request format into a specific format of the database manager to thereby provide for the database manager to query the legacy database and return at least one response description to the metadata server application, the metadata server application translating the at least one response description into a predetermined description format and returning the translated description to the requesting media browser application for presentation to the user, the translated description including at least one link which represents a return request for description to the metadata server application.

Amended independent Claim 25 is a system for facilitating access to structured information from a plurality of heterogeneous information sources, the system comprising (a) an information server associated with each the information source and operable as a structured information generating process for communicating with one or more structured information receiving processes, each information server being configured to perform, for an information source, the steps of (i) receiving a request for the structured information from one of the structured information receiving processes in a predetermined request format, (ii) interpreting the received request according to the predetermined request format, (iii) accessing information in the associated information source in response to the interpreted request, (iv) formatting the accessed information as the structured information according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting structured information containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the information server for structured information; and (v) sending the structured information to the structured information receiving process, and (b) at least one structured information receiving process accessible to and operable by potential users of the information sources with a single user interface to access and interpret the structured information from the multiple information servers.

Amended independent Claim 37 is a metadata server operable as a description-generating process for communicating with one or more description-receiving processes, the metadata server being configured to perform the steps of (i) receiving a request for descriptions of multimedia items from one of the description-receiving processes in a predetermined request format, wherein information required by the descriptions is stored in corresponding metadata collections associated with the multimedia

items, (ii) interpreting the received request according to the predetermined request format, (iii) accessing the information about the multimedia items in the metadata collection of the content provider in response to the interpreted request, (iv) formatting the accessed information as a description according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting description containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the metadata server for descriptions of multimedia items, and (v) sending the formatted description to the description-receiving process.

Amended independent Claim 49 is an information server operable as a structured information generating process for communicating with one or more structured information receiving processes, the information server being configured to perform the steps of (i) receiving a request for structured information from one of the structured information receiving processes in a predetermined request format, (ii) interpreting the received request according to the predetermined request format, (iii) accessing information in an information source in response to the interpreted request, (iv) formatting the accessed information as the structured information according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting structured information containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the information server for structured information, and (v) sending the structured information to the structured information receiving process.

Amended independent Claims 61 and 62 are computer readable medium claims that substantially correspond to Claim 37 and 49, respectively.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 19, 25, 37, 49, 61 and 62. In particular, the

applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of accessing information about multimedia items in a metadata collection of a content provider in response to an interpreted request, and formatting the accessed information as a description according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting description containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the metadata server for descriptions.

Libert is merely seen to disclose a system for associatively managing distributed multimedia assets. The system includes user agents 30 that represents end-user applications 31, and Resource Brokers 32 that represent resource servers 33. The resource servers store assets, each identified by globally unique Universal Resource Name (URN) or a Universal Resource Locator (URL). In one implementation, described in column 11, lines 57 to 59, the "Resource Brokers may be designed to support searching on metadata via a centralized Search Engine that caches some or all of the Broker's metadata." In this case, the Search Engine needs to be updated whenever searchable metadata is created or changed. In another implementation, the Resource Broker is a wrapper around an existing database that provides all required search services. Thus, Libert is merely seen to disclose that the Resource Broker accepts a query from a search client, processes the query, and returns result. However, Libert is silent as to the format of the results and Applicants fail to see anything in Libert in which the returned results contain at least one link which represents a return query to the Resource Broker. In fact, as Applicants understand Libert, once the results of a query are returned, if the user wants to perform another (more detailed or sub-topic query), he/she would need to input information for the query to start the sub-query from scratch. That is, the user cannot simply select a link in the returned results,

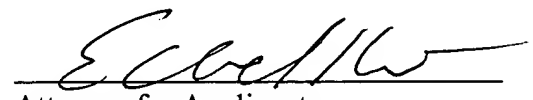
where the link represents a return query. Accordingly, Libert is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of accessing information about multimedia items in a metadata collection of a content provider in response to an interpreted request, and formatting the accessed information as a description according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting description containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the metadata server for descriptions.

Ferguson has been studied but is not seen to add anything that, when combined with Libert, would have overcome the deficiencies of Libert. More particularly, Ferguson, like Libert, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of accessing information about multimedia items in a metadata collection of a content provider in response to an interpreted request, and formatting the accessed information as a description according to a predetermined scheme, the resulting description containing at least one link which represents a return request in the predetermined request format to the metadata server for descriptions. Accordingly, the proposed combination of Libert and Ferguson still would not have resulted in the present invention.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants
Edward A. Kmett
Registration No.: 42,746

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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